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Industry Safe Weight Limit
for Workers on Offshore
Installations

Policy

Issue 1
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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations	Definitions
NHS	National Health Service
EASA	European Union Aviation Safety Agency
FRC	Fast Rescue Craft
HEC	Human External Cargo
OEUK	Offshore Energies UK
SAR	Search and rescue
SARH	Search and Rescue Helicopter
UKCS	United Kingdom Continental Shelf
VantagePOB	Personnel on Board and record keeping system

1 Offshore Installations Safe Weight Limit Policy

The increasing weight of offshore workers presents a safety hazard. 2022 data of offshore workers weights indicated the problem was acute particularly in relation to emergency response. This policy is the culmination of multiple workshops and statistical reviews into the issue. It has been developed by a workgroup of industry experts and stakeholders. The workgroup evaluated controls to limit the risk exposure of heavy workers offshore and found that mitigations for workers above 124kg were not sufficient to address the risks identified.

1.1 Offshore Installations Safe weight limit

HM Coastguard and Search and Rescue Helicopter operators have highlighted restrictions on winching capacity above 124.7kg. To maximise the availability of a search and rescue helicopter transfer from an installation to onshore and for the reasons set out in detail in the accompanying Explanatory Note to this policy, **a clothed weight limit of 124kg** is proposed for all offshore workers. Clothed weight means dressed in compliance with the industry clothing travel policy for the season when they are travelling.

This limit includes a safety margin of 0.7kg. This is considered reasonable to accommodate minor fluctuations in weight during the offshore trip without onerously excluding workers.

1.2 Risk Mitigations

Various options to introduce and manage a weight limit have been identified:

- The primary control for the weight of workers will be via the Medical Fitness of Offshore Work Guideline which will be updated to reflect the controls below.
 - If a worker exceeds a weight of 124kg fully clothed at a routine OEUK offshore medical examination (held every two years), a fitness to work certificate will not be issued. A fitness to work certificate will be issued when the individual's weight falls below 124kg fully clothed with the below restrictions.
 - Those workers weighing between 120.1kg and 124kg at their OEUK offshore medical examination will receive a reduced-duration medical certificate valid for up to 3 months to encourage weight loss.
 - Those workers weighing between 115kg and 120kg at their OEUK offshore medical examination will receive a reduced-duration medical certificate valid for up to 6 months to encourage weight loss.
 - If a worker's weight exceeds 110kg (but is less than 115kg) at the OEUK offshore medical, they will be reminded of the 124kg weight limit.
- The secondary control will be company mobilisation procedures for workers. These must be modified to ensure that individuals who may be close to the weight limit are flagged early and reminded of the weight limit, to prompt them to check their weight and confirm that they remain below the limit prior to travelling to the heliport.
- The tertiary control and final barrier to ensure workers over the weight limit do not travel offshore will be at the onshore heliport. Workers mobilising offshore will continue to be weighed as part of the standard flight check-in arrangements. Workers weighing greater than

124kg (i.e. 124.1kg or more) clothed on the out bound flight will not be permitted to travel offshore after the mandatory compliance date (see below) even if they hold an otherwise valid and in-date OEUK medical certificate.

- Where a worker cannot travel offshore due to their weight there will be a clear process agreed between each helicopter operator and client.
- Workers travelling onshore from an offshore location are not subject to a safe weight restriction.
- In addition to the control measures identified above, employers should consider what support can be provided to their staff and individual workers should make efforts to ensure that they maintain a weight of below 124kg to avoid restrictions in their ability to work offshore.

Risk Mitigation	Detail	Comment
Routine Offshore Medicals	Workers over 124kg will not be issued with an OEUK fitness to work certificate	Recommend weight loss programmes
	Reduced-duration OEUK fitness to work certificate for workers between 120.1kg and 124kg	Certificate no longer than 3-month duration
	Reduced-duration OEUK fitness to work certificate for workers between 115kg – 120kg	Certificate no longer than 6-month duration
	Workers >110kg but <114.9kg	Verbally reminded of the new safety weight limit
Operator Mobilisation Procedures	Flag workers close to 124kg weight and require confirmation of below 124kg prior to mobilisation	Aim is to avoid workers above 124kg mobilising to heliports
Heliports	Workers over 124kg will not be permitted to travel offshore.	Clear process agreed between helicopter operator and client

2 Implementation Strategy

The implementation strategy has been developed with the purpose of minimising the number of workers affected by the offshore weight limit, keeping our valuable workers in work. To achieve this a staggered implementation strategy has been developed. The policy has subject to legal review by a firm appointed by OEUK. That review was restricted to a consideration of legal issues for OEUK (not operators, employers or employees) that might arise from the implementation of this policy.

The phases of implementation will be:

- **Introduction & Awareness Phase** - OEUK to publicise and communicate general information to the workforce whilst employers will engage with company specific information.
- **Transition Phase** – affected workers should engage in health weight-loss efforts. Employers should engage with staff and provide weight loss support. Individuals heavier than 124kg who are renewing medicals during this time will not be given a medical valid beyond the implementation date. Individuals between 115kg and 124kg will be given restricted duration certification as per OEUK Medical Fitness for Offshore Work Issue 8 (please see explanatory note).
- **Mandatory Implementation Date –weight limit of 124kg for all workers.** The safe weight limit is established as an on-going safety control. Workers between 115kg – 124kg will be issued restricted duration certification.

2.1 Timescale

The policy will be finalised on 1st October however there will be one month for companies to align internal communications to their workforce before the policy is implemented on 1st November 2025. There will be 3 phases:

Phase 1 (Introduction & Awareness)	1st November 2025 – 31st Jan 2026	3 months
Phase 2 (Transition Phase)	1st Feb 2026 – 31 st Oct 2026	9 months
Phase 3 (Mandatory Implementation)	1st November 2026	

2.2 Communication

An industry communication package has been developed to explain the risks identified, reasons for the weight limit introduction, this will describe the phases of introduction and timescales involved. The information to the workforce should contain information about sustainable weight loss programmes.

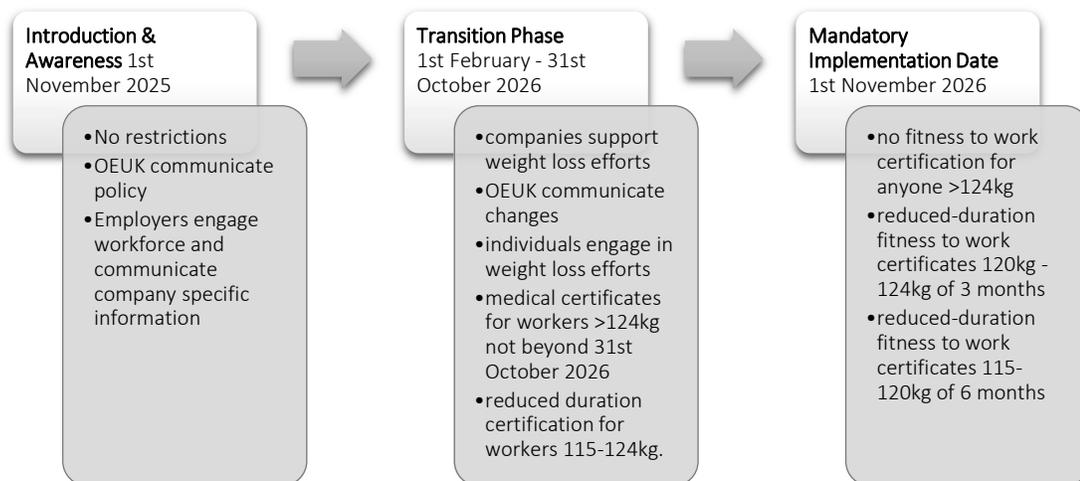
2.3 Employers’ transitional arrangements

During the introduction & awareness and transition phases 1st November 2025 – 31st October 2026 employers should provide employees with information about the support available to them to lose weight at an achievable and healthy rate with a view to being able to achieve a clothed weight of 124kg or less by the mandatory implementation date. During this time there will be no mandatory weight

restriction. Workers going for OEUK medical examinations during the transition phase who are greater than 115kg will receive a reduced-duration certificate, as described in the OEUK Medical Fitness for Offshore Work Issue 8 and explanatory note to this policy.

Whilst all staff going offshore need to understand the implications of the new offshore weight limit, it is recommended that employers seek to identify workers who are likely to be impacted by the implementation of this policy at the beginning of the supportive implementation phase to highlight the policy changes, outline the support available to them, and signpost them to appropriate weight-loss programmes. The total implementation phase is 12 months however the duration of standard medical certification is 2 years therefore some workers may be restricted for offshore travel despite holding a valid medical certificate. Accordingly, it may be beneficial for employers to review workers with medical expiry dates beyond the various implementation dates to pre-empt issues with helicopter check-in.

Individual employers should consider the support they make available to workers during and after the supportive implementation phase and conditional compliance phase. This may vary from employer to employer taking account of their size and administrative resources. Employees are encouraged to take part in healthy weight reduction programmes. Details of programmes are contained in Appendix B of the accompanying Explanatory Note.





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OGUK Technical Notes

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Technical Notes are part of the OGUK suite of Guidelines, free for our members.

OEUK.org.uk

info@OEUK.org.uk

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